

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 8, 9, 13 and 14 are amended.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because e.g. they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

I. Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Egendorf (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0177111 A1). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

In particular, Egendorf does not disclose or suggest linkage information identifiers including at least one identifier of a document set, document information including at least one identifier of a document set, wherein the linkage information and the document information are linked to each other when the identifier of document set included in the linkage information corresponds with the identifier of document set included in the document information, as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claims 8 and 13.

The Office Action on page 9 asserts that Egendorf discloses "[t]he descriptive packets include an identification of the information source and content information." The Office Action further asserts that "[t]he claimed 'identifier of the document sets' are taught by

Egendorf by his searchbase comprising packets that identify linkage information and document information in that the packet contain information sources that have information relevant to the category of the node."

As a preliminary matter, Applicants respectfully disagree with the Office Action's conclusory statement above. As discussed in the April 30, 2004 Amendment, Egendorf's information sources refer to the plural databases. Further, the descriptive packets do not identify document information. This assertion is support by the fact that Egendorf discloses on paragraph [0152] that a search request is received from a user for retrieving information in accordance with a search criteria. In other words, the descriptive packets identify the database which contains the information and the search criteria identifies the information. As such, the packet includes an identification of the information source (i.e., identification of the database), but does not include the identifiers of document sets identifying one or more documents stored in the plural databases.

However, even if the Office Action's interpretation is to be followed, Egendorf does not disclose or suggest the above-noted features of claims 1, 8 and 13. Specifically, Egendorf discloses at Fig. 2b that the descriptive packets are separate from the information sources (i.e., databases). As disclosed on page 11, paragraph [0151], a descriptive packet is produced for each information source from information that includes an identification of the information source and a content description, a query language and usable template, a sending protocol and a receiving protocol. Paragraph [0153] describes that queries are sent to the identified information sources in accordance with the sending protocol of the descriptive packets and information from the identified information sources is received with the receiving protocol of the descriptive packets.

Nowhere does Egendorf disclose or suggest the linkage information and the document information are linked to each other when the identifier of document set included in the

linkage information corresponds with the identifier of document set included in the document information. If the Office Actions interpretation is to be followed, then, descriptive packets, which the Office Action has associated with the claimed identifier of document sets, should link the linkage information with the document information, when the associated descriptive packet of the linkage information corresponds to the descriptive packet of the document information. However, according to Egendorf, the document information does not have a descriptive packet, but rather, the descriptive packet is utilized to access document information (see Egendorf at paragraph [0153]).

Moreover, Egendorf does not disclose or suggest selecting a document set identifier by searching document information on document sets, the document information including document set identifiers, selecting an access target database by searching linkage information, corresponding to the selected document set identifier, wherein the linkage information includes document set identifiers, as recited in independent claim 9, and similarly recited in independent claim 14.

As discussed above, for Egendorf to disclose or suggest the above-noted features, Egendorf would have to disclose that the document information includes a descriptive packet. However, according to Egendorf at paragraph [0153], the descriptive packet is utilized to access document information. Therefore, Egendorf does not disclose or suggest the above-noted features of the claims.

Accordingly, independent claims 1, 8, 9, 13 and 14 define patentable subject matter. Claims 2-7 and 10-12 depend from the respective independent claims, and therefore also define patentable subject matter as well as for the other features they recite. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-14 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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